

U.S. Dept. of Labor: Cites Wisconsin machine manufacturer after explosion severely injures employee

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SPOONER, WI – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has cited fabrication and machining company Spooner Machine Inc. – based in Spooner, Wisconsin – for willful and serious safety violations after an explosion at the facility led to the amputation of an employee’s legs. OSHA proposed penalties of \$221,168.

OSHA investigators determined an accumulation of hydrogen gas caused the explosion, and cited Spooner Machine Inc. for failing to develop and implement procedures to control the release of hydrogen gas during service and maintenance; to ensure proper machine guarding; store gas and oxygen cylinders properly; to provide required training; and protect employees from electrical hazards. OSHA has placed Spooner Machine Inc. in its Severe Violator Enforcement Program.

“Employers are required to ensure safe operating procedures in their facilities,” said OSHA Eau Claire Area Office Director Mark Hysell. “This injury could have been prevented if the employer had properly protected their workers from the release of hazardous energy.”

The company has 15 business days from receipt of the citations and penalties to comply, request an informal conference with OSHA’s area director, or contest the findings before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to help ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <https://www.osha.gov>.